

CAMP BEST FRIENDS



HISTORY OF CAMP BEST FRIENDS

The City of Atlanta, Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs continues to meet the challenge of changing lives through the camp experience provided by the Camp Best Friends program. In 1981, City of Atlanta Honorable Mayor Maynard Jackson was faced with a daunting and perilous crisis, later to become internationally publicized as "Atlanta's Missing and Murdered Children." Concerned about providing a safe summer environment for Atlanta's youngsters, Mayor Jackson and his staff designed and crafted the Super Summer program, one of the largest municipally operated summer day camp programs in the country.

During the administration of Honorable Mayor Andrew Young, the name was changed from Super Summer to Camp Best Friends. The purpose of the camp was to provide a safe haven for Atlanta's youth and a place for engagement in wholesome, organized and productive recreational activities. Today, Camp Best Friends offers a variety of enrichment programs, including different educational, cultural and physical activities. Celebrating over 30 years of service, Camp Best Friends has touched the lives of over a quarter of a million Atlanta youth, more than fulfilling its mission. In conjunction with all the fun summer brings, It incorporates a summer education program that boosts student motivation to read, generates more positive attitudes toward learning, and connects the needs of children and families to the resources of their communities. Once again making the City of Atlanta Office of Recreation and Youth Development, the blue print model for quality and enriching programming.

Parents appreciate the meaningful opportunities for involvement and unique learning opportunities campers receive. Camp Best Friends is a safe environment filled with wonder, fascination and surprise.



WHO DO WE SERVE?

Children

As a vital part of the community and heart and soul of Atlanta, Camp Best Friends opens its doors to ALL youth ages 5 to 12. Youth are provided with hands –on-activities, integrated reading, positive group interaction and skill development, Camp Best Friends thwarts the pattern of self destructive behavior in youth. The program encourages youth to build positive relationships and develop natural abilities. In this way, they take important steps toward a lifetime of meaningful achievement.

Teens

Camp Best Friends keeps a finger on the pulse of Atlanta's teen population through Atlanta Teen Leaders. The program serves teens with employment opportunities and age specific programming designed to increase confidence and motivation. Whether earning community service hours for graduation or a stipend, participating in activities such as collegiate tours, recreational projects, team building or making new friends, teens are connected and productive leaders.

Seniors

There is no age limit on imagination or time span on making a "Best Friend". Among the many recreational settings designed for senior citizens, picking any one leisure indulgence from a list of hobbies and joining a club to meet and interact with like-minded people are at the top of the list. Our senior's camp for citizens ages 50 and up encompasses just that!

Special Needs Population

Inclusion is a cornerstone of the Camp Best Friends philosophy. Trained professionals assist special needs campers in reaching meaningful goals and managing physical challenges.

WHAT TYPES OF CAMPS?

Traditional

From the moment campers arrive each day, service leader interns guide them through traditional camp experiences including an integrated reading curriculum, creative writing, drama, music, group games, dance, arts and crafts and physical fitness. Every week offers a new theme, swimming, guest speakers, field trips and other fun activities. At our sites, youth have opportunities to sing songs, tell stories, and meet new friends....the Camp Best Friends way!

Specialty

Ranging from line dancing with senior citizens after apple picking to learning the butterfly stroke and a follow through on the tennis court, there are a wide variety of specialty camps for every kid (from young to older) to enjoy within Camp Best Friends! Develop your skills in areas you're comfortable with or try something new!

SPECIALTY CAMP TYPES

Athletic Camps

Choose from a variety of athletic camps at various skill levels. Experienced instructors, coaches, and college athletes provide guidance according to individual need. Instructors will help you sharpen your skills on the field, the court or in the pool. Campers will set goals, share in a positive, team-oriented atmosphere, and develop healthy habits that will help them achieve success.

Cultural Clubs

Camp Best Friends cultural specialty camps strive to provide cultural experiences for children through performing/visual arts instruction mixed with traditional camp activities.

Freedom Schools

The City of Atlanta has incorporated in our specialty camps the Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools program. This program provides summer enrichment that helps children fall in love with reading, increases their self-esteem, and generates more positive attitudes toward learning. Children are taught using a model curriculum that supports children and families around five essential components: high quality academic enrichment; parent and family involvement; civic engagement and social action; intergenerational leadership development; and nutrition, health and mental health. These characteristics tied with our traditional camp qualities, is a recipe of summer fun!

Seniors

If you think summer camps have an age limit, think again! Seniors ages 50 and up join in on the Camp Best Friends fun as well! Our senior camp program provides social enrichment for senior citizens through quality educational, recreational, nutritional, cross-generational and supportive services. We promote the celebration of life through physical and mental well-being, while reaffirming the dignity and value of older adults in our community.



Teens

The City of Atlanta ATL Summer of Service Learning (SSL) Program offers teens ages 14-18 the opportunity to become involved in their community while receiving leadership training in the summer as well! ATL Summer of Service Learning, (SSL) is a teen camp based around service and experiential learning. These components, coupled with cross-cultural exchanges, teach you what it means to be a responsible community citizen. As participants of SSL, teens will have the opportunity to channel their creativity and passion in meaningful community service, engage in the world around them, and address problems of local, national or global importance. The ATL SSL program encourages youth to be more than just volunteers by incorporating service-learning activities that revolve around decision-making, leadership, and teamwork.

Therapeutic

The Camp Best Friends Therapeutic specialty camp provides an inclusive environment for campers ages 5 to 21 with disabilities the opportunity to participate in summer program in a safe structured environment to promote growth in a healthy lifestyle. The general objectives of the therapeutic camp are to increase literacy levels, promote appropriate social skills, promote positive active participation, and positive peer interaction.

DAILY ACTIVITIES AT ALL SITES

- Arts & Crafts
- Computer Instruction
- Creative Writing
- Exercise
- Games
- Integrated Reading
- Organized Sports
- Swim (*Recreational and Instructional*)
- Golf / Tennis Instruction*
- Martial Arts*
- Dance*
- Performing Arts*
- Interactive Science*

*Site specific



ABOUT THE CITY OF ATLANTA'S OFFICE OF RECREATION & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT MISSION

Our mission is to commit to strong communities and a vibrant economy, by providing safe, exceptional parks, facilities and programs through effective leadership, collaboration and innovation.

Our vision is to provide exceptional spaces and memorable experiences that enrich lives, strengthen communities and make Atlanta the City of choice.



Office of Recreation & Youth Development
c/o Camp Best Friends

233 Peachtree Street, Suite 1700

Atlanta, Georgia 30303

404.546.6788 (Phone)

404.546.9498 (Fax)

CampBestFriends@atlantaga.gov



CAMP
BEST
FRIENDS